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### **Cultural Détente, Academic Exchanges and Soviet Americanists during the Brezhnev Era**

“Soviet experts in North American studies, so-called Americanists, together with Soviet journalists, who traveled frequently to the United States during the Brezhnev era, always played a very important role of **mediators** (*posrednikov*) between American and Soviet cultures, especially during the détente of the 1970s,” emphasized recently Leonid Leshchenko, a Soviet scholar of US history from Kyiv, Ukraine. “During this time, following the new KGB requirements, in their academic reports all Soviet Americanists made their practical recommendations not only about US politics and diplomacy, but also about various American cultural products and innovations, which could be brought to the Soviet audiences. Since this time, as a result of these recommendations, Soviet administration not only incorporated the new cultural elements and forms (from America) in our radio, television, film and publishing industries, but also included a significant number of Soviet Americanists in the editorial boards of various literary and film journals. This produced a mass influx of the new cultural practices from America (from literature to films and television) that resulted in a real ideological confusion, especially in our Soviet provincial society. Therefore, traveling back and forth between America and the USSR, Soviet Americanists, as cultural mediators between American and Soviet civilizations during détente, indirectly contributed to this ideological and cultural confusion in Soviet society during the Brezhnev era.”<sup>1</sup>

To some extent Leshchenko paraphrased the old idea of a historian Nikolai Bolkhovitinov, one of the founders of American studies (*Amerikanistika*) in the Soviet Union, who had interpreted the mission of such “cultural mediators” as the “people’s diplomacy,” a role of “improving the mutual understanding” between American and Soviet people. As Bolkhovitinov explained, “even the KGB people who prevailed among Soviet Americanists contributed to this kind of mutual understanding.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Leonid Leshchenko, July 23, 2012, Kyiv.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Nikolai N. Bolkhovitinov, May 12, 1996, Moscow. As Bolkhovitinov explained his concept in 1980, “In the past historians of international relations very seldom studied socio-political, scientific and cultural ties. Their attention was centered on inter-state and, first and foremost, diplomatic relations, on the activity of prominent statesmen, famous generals and diplomats, tsars and presidents. This left out of the history of international relations the principal element, the *people*, as represented by the finest, most educated and active personages – scholars, public figures, men of letters, journalists. I see my main merit in trying to overcome this shortcoming and to study relations between Russia and the USA in their fullest dimension, comprehensively, including the history of trade, socio-political, scientific and cultural ties, the history of Russian America, the business contacts of Russian

Arnold Shlepakov, another Soviet scholar of US history from Ukraine, stressed this role of Americanists as **mediators** as well:

“Soviet Americanists not only produced scholarly books about American civilization after visiting US. They also became instrumental in bringing the new American cultural products and ideas back home, offering a new format for Soviet television shows with American popular music, promoting Miles Davis “cool jazz” records, helping to organize concerts of Duke Ellington and bluesman BB King in Leningrad and Moscow, negotiating about buying US movie *China Syndrome* in 1979 for the Soviet audience to discuss a danger of nuclear power. Nowadays, people forgot about the cultural role of Soviet Americanists, who not only opened America for themselves but also brought various cultural forms from America, American modernity, to the entire Soviet society. Through studies of these roles and cultural interactions we could understand better a variety of the cultural perceptions of American-Soviet dialogue during the Brezhnev era.”<sup>3</sup>

So following suggestions of Shlepakov, and using various archival documents, including materials of the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) from the Manuscript Collection of the Library of Congress, the Soviet travel reports, personal memoirs, diaries, correspondence, and more than seventy interviews, this paper examines various “cultural” roles of Soviet Americanists, 1) as the active participants in “academic détente,” i.e. the academic dialogue between Soviet and American societies, especially during the Soviet-US academic exchanges, and 2) as the mediators between American and Soviet cultures and participants in “cultural détente” in the USSR during the Brezhnev era (1964-82). It is an attempt to give a new look at the problems of western-Soviet cultural and academic dialogue after Stalin, offered recently by Robert English, Vladislav Zubok, Alexei Yurchak, Anne Gorsuch, Andrei Kozovoi and other scholars.<sup>4</sup>

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‘promyshlenniki’ (fur traders) and Boston merchant-sailors, and other connections.” This is a citation from Nikolai N. Bolkhovitinov, “How I Became a Historian,” *Journal of American Studies*, 1980, Vol. 14, No. 1, 111.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Arnold M. Shlepakov, April 4, 1991, Kyiv.

<sup>4</sup> Robert English, *Russia and Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals, and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); Vladislav M. Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War From Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), idem, *Zhivago's Children: The Last Russian Intelligentsia* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009); Alexei Yurchak,

### American Studies in the USSR and Academic Exchanges

Contemporaries noted that the Cold War confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union led to an intense “ideological offensive” when thousands of historians and social scientists in both countries became involved in area studies such as Soviet studies in the USA and American studies in the USSR. During the Cold War in the 1960s and the 1970s, the most important centers of the various area studies in the Soviet Union were those devoted to US history, economy, politics and culture.<sup>5</sup> But in contrast to the American side of the Cold War story, where the US government and various corporations had funded college-based centers for Soviet studies as early as the 1940s, the Soviet centers of American studies were organized much later and only in the Moscow-based institutions of the USSR Academy of Sciences. From the early beginning, in the United States various Russian and Soviet research centers were spread all over the country in a de-centralized fashion and were affiliated with different colleges and universities. All these American centers were professionally organized, well-funded, and they immediately became integrated in a so-called academic-national security complex, especially during the late 1940s and the 1950s.<sup>6</sup>

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*Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Anne Gorsuch, *All This Is Your World: Soviet Tourism at Home and Abroad after Stalin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011) and various publications of Andrei Kozovoi in French [Andrei Kozovoi, *Par-delà le mur La culture de guerre froide soviétique entre deux déteintes* (Paris: Complexe, 2009)] and in English, especially his, “Eye to eye with the ‘Main enemy’: Soviet youth travel to the United States,” *Ab Imperio*, 2011, No. 2, 221-236. See also the idealistic biographies of the major Soviet Americanists: B. D. Kozenko, “Igor Petrovich Dementiev,” *Portrety istorikov: vremia i sud’by*, Vol. 4: *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, Ed. by G. N. Sevostianov (Moscow: Nauka, 2004), 143-156; A.S. Manykin, V. V. Sogrin, “Nikolai Vasilievich Sivachev,” *ibid.*, 422-436; A. Yu. Petrov, “Bolkhovitinov Nikolai Nikolaevich (1930-2008),” *Portrety istorikov: vremia i sud’by*, Vol. 5: *Srednie veka. Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, Ed. by G. N. Sevostianov (Moscow: Nauka, 2010), 163-177; B. D. Kozenko, I. I. Kurilla, “Ivanov Robert Fedorovich (1925-2003),” *ibid.*, 270-283; R. Sh. Ganelin, V. V. Noskov, V. N. Pleshkov, “Fursenko Aleksandr Aleksandrovich (1922-2004),” *ibid.*, 555-571.

<sup>5</sup> Christopher Simpson, “Introduction,” *Universities and Empire: Money and Politics in the Social Sciences during the Cold War*, Edited by Christopher Simpson (New York, 1998), xvi. See also a good historical survey of development of the American centers for Russian and Soviet studies as the Cold War’s area studies centers in David Engerman, *Know Your Enemy: The Rise and Fall of America’s Soviet Experts* (New York, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> See about this in Engerman, *Op. cit.*, and *Universities and Empire*, xx.

Paradoxically, the first professional Soviet centers of American studies appeared much later, only after Stalin's death, during the relaxation of international tensions and improvement of the US-Soviet relations. Institutionalization of the Soviet centers of American studies according to the directives of the Soviet state and the KGB began in special research institutes of the USSR Academy of Sciences only in the 1960s and the 1970s. But the real peak of popularity and wide spread of American studies in the USSR during the late 1970s and the 1980s was a result of the individual efforts by local college professors-enthusiasts who created their own schools for studies of US history, politics, economics, and culture at the major universities in big industrial cities of the USSR.<sup>7</sup>

In 1953, the Soviet government created the first special center for the “studies of American countries” at the Institute of History of the USSR Academy of Science. From the beginning this center united the experts in Latin American and US history. After the division of the Institute of History in 1968 in two separate Institutes – of World History and USSR History - the center for the “studies of American countries” was also divided. All specialists in Latin American history left this center. After this division in 1968 the center was transformed in a new “sector of history of the USA and Canada” at the new Institute of World History [hereafter – IVI] under leadership of a former KGB/intelligence officer Grigorii Sevostianov. He was finally

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<sup>7</sup> See a growing literature about the Soviet area studies during the Cold War, especially: Tyrus W. Cobb, “National Security Perspectives of Soviet ‘ThinkTanks’,” *Problems of Communism*, 6 (1981): 51–59; Rose Gottemoeller and Paul Fritz Langer, *Foreign Area Studies in the USSR. Training and Employment of Specialists*, (Santa Monica, 1983); V. M. Danylenko, *Ukraina v mizhnarodnykh naukovo-tekhnichnykh zv'iazkakh (70-80-i rr.)* (Kyiv, 1993); Marie-Pierre Rey, “Le Département International du Comité Central du PCUS, le MID et la Politique Extérieure Soviétique de 1953 à 1991,” *Communisme* 74/75 (2003): 179–215; Piotr Cherkasov, *IMEMO. Institut Mirovoi Ekonomiki i Mezhdunarodnykh Otnoshenii. Portret na fone epokhi* (Moscow, 2004); Vladislav Zubok, “Sowjetische Westexperten,” in: *Macht und Geist im Kalten Krieg*, Edited by Bernd Greiner, Tim Müller, Claudia Weber. (Hamburg, 2011), 108–135.

replaced in 1988 by Nikolai Bolkhovitinov, who was not connected to the KGB.<sup>8</sup> This became the normal institutional practice in all centers for American studies in the Soviet Union: all leaders of these centers were approved by the KGB, or had direct connections to this organization. The second Soviet center of the American studies was created in May 1967 as a special Institute of the USA at the USSR Academy of Science (it was re-named in 1975 as the Institute of the USA and Canada [hereafter – ISKAN]) under the leadership of Georgii Arbatov.<sup>9</sup> Many prominent Soviet experts in US economy and politics, including Nikolai Inozemtsev, the first Soviet expert in American contemporary economic history, were employed by IMEMO (Moscow's Institute of World Economy and International Relations, the USSR Academy of Sciences), the old center of the Soviet economic theory, closed by Stalin in 1949 and re-opened during the Khrushchev's thaw.<sup>10</sup>

In 1958 the Soviet government permitted the first exchange of Soviet students and scholars with the United States.<sup>11</sup> Till 1968 the major American organization, which administered the scholarly exchanges with the Soviets, was called the Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants (IUCTG). In 1968 it was replaced by the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), the organization established at the request of the American Council of

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<sup>8</sup> "Doklad akademika N. N. Bolkhovitinova," *Novaia i noveishaia istoria*, 2003, No. 6, 185; "Yubilei I. A. Beliaevskoi," *Amerikanskii ezhegodnik* [hereafter – AE] 1995 (Moscow, 1996), 13, 15. In 1970 the sector began publishing its periodical *Amerikanskii ezhegodnik*.

<sup>9</sup> See various editions of the memoirs, written by the first director of this Institute: G. A. Arbatov, *Zatianuvsheesia vyzdorovlenie (1953-1985 gg.) Svidetel'stvo sovremennika* (Moscow, 1991), 381-399; Georgii Arbatov, *Chelovek sistemy: Nabliudeniia i razmyshleniia ochevidtva eio raspada* (Moscow, 2002), 132-147, and a chapter "The Institute: How We 'Discovered' America" in English in his, *The System*, 295-328. ISKAN had its own monthly magazine *SShA: ekonomika, politika, ideologiia*.

<sup>10</sup> See how Arbatov described a role of a revived IMEMO: Arbatov, *Zatianuvsheesia vyzdorovlenie*, 73-74. Compare with Cherkasov, Op. cit., 81-138, 139-200, 201-286.

<sup>11</sup> See especially "Soglasenie mezhdru SSSR i SSHA ob obmenakh v oblasti kul'tury, tekhniki i obrazovania," *Pravda*, 1958, January 29, no. 29, p. 6. See about this and following U.S.-USSR exchanges agreements in the books of those who organized these exchanges from the US side: Robert F. Byrnes, *Soviet-American Academic Exchanges, 1958-1975* (Bloomington, IN, 1976), 46-47, 48ff., and Yale Richmond, *U.S.-Soviet Cultural Exchanges, 1958-1986* (Boulder, CO, 1987), 2, 4ff. Compare with the Russian publications, especially A.S. Krymskaia, "K istorii nauchno-obrazovatel'nykh obmenov mezhdru SSSR i SSHA v kontse 1950-kh – 1960-e gg.," *Noveishaia istoriia Rossii*, 2011, No. 2, 99-106.

Learned Societies (ACLS) and the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) to administer academic exchanges with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. IREX conducted the exchange programs together with the USSR Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education, and the Soviet Academy of Sciences.<sup>12</sup> According to these programs, after 1968, 40 Soviet graduate students or young faculty spent one or two semesters in the US each year, and 10 or more Soviet professors conducted research for periods of two to five months each year. Although the overwhelming majority of Soviet students and professors, who participated in academic exchanges, represented sciences or engineering, IREX tried to involve Soviet experts in the humanities and social sciences in its programs as well. As a result, IREX supervised a special program of collaborative research, conferences and workshops between ACLS and the Soviet Academy under the bilateral Commission on the Social Sciences and Humanities, established in 1975. According to an administrator of these programs, about 80 Americans and 80 Soviets were “exchanged each year under the Commission’s activities, usually for visits of about one week. Between 1958 and the end of 1985, some 2,000 Americans and 2,000 Soviets were exchanged under IUCTG and IREX programs.”<sup>13</sup>

The dynamics and frequency of the visits to the United States dramatically changed during the Brezhnev era, especially in the period of détente of the 1970s. As contemporaries observed:

In 1961-62 we usually knew only one or two rare fortunate candidates from either Moscow University or the Academy of Sciences who visited America; by the end of the 1960s we had known at least five names among our colleagues not only from Moscow but also from Leningrad who traveled on a regular basis to the States; but after 1974 it was already common practice to send our Americanists from all over the Soviet Union, hundreds of them, – to the United States and Canada.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> See about this in Byrnes, *Op. cit.* and Engerman, *Op. cit.*, 139, 171, 246-248.

<sup>13</sup> Richmond, *U.S.-Soviet Cultural Exchanges, 1958-1986*, 32.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Robert F. Ivanov, Moscow, June 25, 1991.

“Yes, it is true,” confirmed the Ukrainian Americanist Arnold Shlepakov, “thanks to détente in the 1970s the first Ukrainian scholars went to America.”<sup>15</sup> More visits (almost 600!) of Soviet Americanists were made during the Brezhnev era, especially during the détente period. One of these Soviet visiting scholars based at Columbia University, Aleksei Burmistenko, a young historian of American journalism from Moscow, even called numerous Soviet academic guests in US “the children of détente” in 1977.<sup>16</sup>

During the Brezhnev’s détente in the 1970s the new centers for American studies were organized at the Department of History of Moscow State University (hereafter, – MGU), in Leningrad and other industrial cities of the Soviet Union. According to the Soviet government’s decision in 1973-74, the MGU department of history became a center for an establishment of Fulbright program in the USSR. In 1975, Nikolai Sivachev, from the same department, established the Scholarly Coordinating Council on American Studies at this university. In November 1978, under his leadership, a new Soviet center for American studies was organized there, a so-called “laboratory of American studies” affiliated with a department of modern and contemporary history.<sup>17</sup>

In Kyiv, the capital of the Soviet Ukraine, under the leadership of Ukrainian scholar Arnold Shlepakov, a department of modern and contemporary history at the Institute of History of the Ukrainian Academy of Science was transformed into a new Soviet center of American studies during 1969-1978. In 1978, this center overgrew its small department and became a new

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<sup>15</sup> Interview with Arnold Shlepakov, Kyiv, Ukraine, April 28, 1990.

<sup>16</sup> Library of Congress. Archival Manuscript Collection. International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) [hereafter – LC. IREX]. RC 19 (1976-77), F 7; *The Milwaukee Journal*, February 21, 1977. An essay about Burmistenko’s visit (“Soviet Critic Finds US Press Ruthless”) in this local newspaper quoted him, calling himself “I am a child of détente.” Compare with English, Op. cit., 125.

<sup>17</sup> A.A. Porshakova, “Laboratoria istorii SShA v MGU,” *AE*. 1989, 256-265. In 1983 after Sivachev’s death, Evgenii F. Yaz’kov became a leader of this center. See also Yu. N. Rogulev, “Dvenadtsat’ let vzaimovыgodnogo sotrudnichestva (o professional’nykh svyaziakh istorikov-amerikanistov MGU s amerikanskimi kollegami),” *AE*. 1986, 246-250. Compare with *Pamiaty professora N. V. Sivacheva. SShA: Evoliutsia osnovnykh ideino-politicheskikh kontseptsii*, Ed by A. S. Manykin (Moscow, 2004), see esp. 5-16.

institute of the Ukrainian Academy: – the Institute of Social and Economic Problems of the Foreign Countries.<sup>18</sup> In November-December 1971, during the first All-Union symposium of the Soviet Americanists, 10 of 130 experts in US history were from Ukrainian institutions. By 1980, Shlepakov's center for American studies in Kyiv united 15 specialists in US history, politics and diplomacy. Ukrainian historian Semyon Appatov at Odesa University prepared at least 10 experts in contemporary US history and diplomacy. At the same time, more than 20 experts in US history (including graduate students) worked at the Institute of the World History. By 1980, ten doctors of historical science, who were specialists in US history, were employed there. An overwhelming majority of these historians were officially affiliated with this Institute's sector of history of the USA and Canada. By the beginning of the 1980s, this sector had 20 members, and a few Americanists were affiliated with other sectors of the same Institute.<sup>19</sup> Eleven specialists in the US political history worked under leadership of Sivachev at the laboratory of American studies at the Department of History of MGU. By 1976 the staff of ISKAN had grown to about 300 and by 1980 to more than 450. About half of these were researchers and half were support staff. Every year this institute accepted approximately 15-20 new postgraduate students. By the late 1970s, the staff of IMEMO numbered about 800, and at least 200 were experts in American studies. From 1964 until the end of the 1970s almost fifty experts in US history had been awarded with a rank of doctor of historical science. In 1991, according to calculations of late E. Yaz'kov, at least 300 Soviet historians (all of them from Russia and Ukraine) studied US history. Technically speaking, more than half, 250 of the 400 Americanists at ISKAN in 1980 held

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<sup>18</sup> Leonid Leshchenko and Ihor Chernikov, "Vsesvitnio vidomyi vitchyzniani uchenyi: Istoryk-miznarodnyk, organizator nauky i diplomat. Do 80-litia vid dnia narodzhennia akademika NAN Ukrainy Arnol'da Mykolaivycha Shlepakova (1930-1996 rr.)" in *Mizhnarodni zv'iazky Ukrainy: naukovy poshuky i znakhidky. Vypusk 19*, Ed. by S. V. Vidnians'kyi (Kyiv: Institut istorii NAN Ukrainy, 2010), 27-28. A majority of scholars affiliated with this Institute studied various problems of US and Canadian politics.

<sup>19</sup> *AE*. 1972, 303-306, interviews with Shlepakov and with Nikolai N. Bolkhovitinov, May 21, 2001.



degrees of either *kandidat* or doctor of historical science; even those who studied US contemporary politics were historians by training. At the end of the 1980s, almost 70% of all 1,000 prominent Soviet Americanists (including political scientists, economists, sociologists, philosophers, literary and film critics) were college professors who taught American studies in major universities of Soviet Russia and Ukraine, in big industrial cities such as Moscow, Leningrad, Kyiv, Odesa and Dnipropetrovsk. More than 60% of the Soviet Americanists employed by universities and colleges were located in Russia, - and almost 40% in - Ukraine. By 1991 it was the largest community of the professional Americanists in the world outside the United States. The Chinese Americanists, the so-called America Watchers, comprised the second largest, - after the Soviet community of America's experts, with almost 700 specialists concentrating in 15 college centers.<sup>20</sup>

### **Soviet Americanists and Cultural Détente in the Soviet Society**

Major positive results of these exchanges were more serious Soviet research work, based on original American sources, and increasing personal contacts and connections between Soviet Americanists and their colleagues. The most important Soviet studies of US history, politics, economy, culture and ideology were published through the 1970s and the 1980s by the most active participants in the exchanges program, by such scholars like Bolkhovitinov and Sivachev.<sup>21</sup> The most influential specialized Soviet periodicals devoted to American studies had

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<sup>20</sup> Calculations were made according to data from *Russian-American Dialogue on the American Revolution*, Ed. By Gordon S. Wood and Louise G. Wood (Columbia, 1995), 7; Barbara L. Dash, *A Defector Reports: The Institute of the USA and Canada* (Falls Church, VA, 1982), 7; Nikolai N. Bolkhovitinov, *SShA: Problemy istorii i sovremennaia istoriografia* (Moscow, 1980), 340; my interview with Bolkhovitinov, May 21, 2001, and with Shlepakov. See also David Shambaugh, *Beautiful Imperialist: China Perceives America, 1972-1990* (Princeton, 1991), 277-278.

<sup>21</sup> See especially Nikolai V. Sivachev, *Pravovoe regulirovanie trudovykh otnoshenii v SSHA* (Moscow, 1972), idem., *SShA: Gosudarstvo i rabochii klass* (Moscow, 1982), and Nikolai N. Bolkhovitinov, *Russko-Amerikanskii otnosheniia* (Moscow, 1975), idem., *SShA: Problemy istorii i sovremennaia istoriografia* (Moscow, 1980).

begun their publication on the regular basis during the same period.<sup>22</sup> Some Americanists from ISKAN and other so-called “spy institutes” from Moscow became major consultants in development of Soviet-American diplomatic relations, which had been extensively covered in recent literature.<sup>23</sup> Americanists also appeared regularly on Soviet radio and television. They even published various essays about their visits to America in popular newspapers and magazines, such as *Vokrug sveta*, *Smena* etc. But paradoxically, Soviet Americanists indirectly influenced the ordinary Soviet consumers in a very different way, through the sphere of cultural consumption, especially consumption of various cultural products from the United States.

During the détente, the very questions from “the KGB survey” for the final reports of Soviet scholars who travelled abroad became more varied. In the 1970s, these questions addressed not only the issues of political situation in capitalist countries, but also dealt with the most popular cultural products in the West – films, plays, books etc. Some of these reports from “the international departments” of universities and research institutes included such new questions like “What books, movies, plays and musicians can you recommend for the Soviet audience?”<sup>24</sup> As Nikolai Bolkhovitinov explained, “suddenly, after 1974, our KGB supervisors began asking us before our trips to America to make notes during our travel what movies, books and plays we could suggest for bringing by Soviet administration to Soviet public. As a result, during the 1970s in my final travel reports I always included the titles of American fiction, plays and movies, which I considered important. Of course, Soviet administration preferred the recommendations from the KGB-reliable scholars rather than my suggestions.”<sup>25</sup> Now the travel reports submitted by the Soviet Americanists described, sometime in detail, various American

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<sup>22</sup> I refer to *Amerikanskii ezhegodnik* and *SSHA: ekonomika, politika, ideologiya*.

<sup>23</sup> See especially, Robert English, *Russia and Idea of the West*, 117-157.

<sup>24</sup> Compare the requirements of 1968 and those of 1975 in the drafts (*chernoviki*) of the international travel reports in Nikolai Bolkhovitinov Personal Papers (1968-2005), Drafts, reports for 1968 and 1975.

<sup>25</sup> My interview with Nikolai N. Bolkhovitinov, May 21, 2001, Moscow.

cultural products that could be recommended for buying and bringing to the Soviet audiences. First of all, numerous new editions of contemporary American literature were bought, translated and published in the Soviet Union following these recommendations. During the 1970s the Soviet journals, such as *Inostrannaia literatura* and *Vsesvit*, published more various American literary products than they did for the entire period of their existence.

During the same time, Ukrainian Americanist Arnold Shlepakov became a member of editorial board of the Ukrainian journal *Vsesvit*, which began regular publication of American best sellers in Ukrainian translation. As a frequent Soviet visitor to America and as an expert in American studies, he supported the publication of two controversial American novels, which were adapted for the screen and became the most popular movies in the United States. His first recommendation for a publication in Soviet Ukraine was the novel *The Godfather* by an American writer Mario Puzo, which was eventually published in Ukrainian translation by *Vsesvit* during the fall of 1973 and the winter of 1974. Publication of this American novel in the Soviet periodical was a sensation. This Ukrainian literary magazine, with its new editor Dmytro Pavlychko, a writer from Western Ukrainian city of Lviv, was the only Soviet periodical which published not only a good translation of the novel, but also included good professional comments about it. Even Russian-speaking readers from other parts of the Soviet Union tried to obtain the issues of *Vsesvit* to read the famous novel, which became a legend because of the release of the Francis Coppola film in the US and a tremendous popularity of this movie music theme composed by Nino Rota among Soviet music fans. Paradoxically, Coppola's film, which was

forbidden in the USSR, was popularized by the Ukrainian periodical, which put a portrait of Marlon Brando as Godfather on the front page of its publication.<sup>26</sup>

The second American novel, which was promoted by Shlepakov, was *Love Story* by Erich Segal. This novel became famous in the Soviet Union because of the film adaptation by Arthur Hiller. During the 1970s Soviet audience had already known about music theme [“Where Do I Begin”] from this film composed by Francis Lai. For many Soviet fans of western popular music, name of Erich Segal was also known as one of the script-writers for the Beatles cartoon film *Yellow Submarine*, popularized by Soviet media since 1968 as the “most progressive anti-imperialist product of the western pop culture.” So during one editorial meeting in *Vsesvit* in 1975, after a reference to this popularity of the Erich Segal among both the Soviet audience and American “progressive critics,” Shlepakov insisted on a publication of *Love Story* in the Ukrainian magazine. His KGB connections helped, and this novel was published in Ukrainian translation in 1976, a December issue of the magazine.<sup>27</sup>

The most direct impact of Soviet Americanists on cultural consumption during détente became obvious in the Soviet movie theaters. According to contemporaries, the most direct impact of the Soviet experts in the studies of US history, politics and culture, so-called Americanists, on film consumption in the USSR during the Brezhnev era became obvious in their role of advising about an inclusion of the feature films from the United States into programs of Moscow International Film Festivals. As Aleksandr Fursenko recalled, “we (Soviet scholars) not only put the American film titles, we recommended, in our travel reports, but also we had

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<sup>26</sup> See Brando’s picture in *Vsesvit*, 10 (1973): 107. The novel was published in *Vsesvit*, (10) 1973: 109-167; 11: 155-201; 12: 120-176; 1 (1974): 85-154 – as Mario P’iuze, *Khreshchennyi bat’ko*, translated by Viktor Batiuk and Oleksandr Ovsiuk and edited by Yurii Lisniak. See also my interview with Leonid Leshchenko, July 23, 2012, Kyiv.

<sup>27</sup> Eric Sigel, “Istoria odnogo kokhannia,” *Vsesvit*, 12 (1976): 11-72, translated by Mar Pinchevs’kyi and Oleksandr Terekh. See on pp. 44-45 photos from the film *Love Story*. See my interview with Arnold M. Shlepakov, April 4, 1991, Kyiv. See how the Beatles cartoon film “Yellow Submarine” was glorified as a cultural “protest against imperialistic war and sufferings of the people and a hymn to a beauty of this world, pleasures of simple life and love” in Soviet press: M. Aleksandrova, “Zheltaia submarina,” *Rovesnik*, July 1969, No. 7, 17.

special meetings with some officials from the main Soviet organization for the acquisition and distribution of foreign films, *Soveksportfilm*. Of course, these officials interviewed the film specialists like Shestakov and Baskakov from the Institute of Cinematic History and Theory, who traveled with us. They were the experts. I recalled how we were invited to advise what recent American films should be included in the program of Moscow Film Festivals during the 1970s.”<sup>28</sup> Viacheslav Shestakov, a Soviet expert in US films and film critic, and V. Baskakov, his supervisor, who visited US in 1974-75 and represented Soviet Cinema Research Institute, became instrumental in providing recommendations to the representatives of Soviet administration regarding a purchase of the American movies for the Soviet domestic consumption.<sup>29</sup> It is noteworthy that Soviet Americanists played more important role in the Soviet acquisition of the American movies during the 1970s. According to the original cultural exchanges agreement of 1958, *Soveksportfilm* was “to enter into contract with representatives of the motion picture industry in the United States, to be approved by the Department of State ... for the purpose of the sale and purchase of films.”<sup>30</sup> As Yale Richmond who participated in this process explained, this cultural agreement “applied only to members of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), the major producers, and did not cover the independent studios which were free to deal with the Soviets outside the agreement.”<sup>31</sup> As a result, Soviet Americanists, film experts looked for the independent film producers and recommended them to *Soveksportfilm*. Of course, the leftist and pro-Soviet sympathies of American producers were important for these recommendations, but the low prices for US movie products also attracted

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<sup>28</sup> Interviews with Aleksandr Fursenko, Moscow, March 19, 1991, Nikolai N. Bolkhovitinov, Moscow, May 21, 2001, and Arnold M. Shlepakov, Kyiv, April 4, 1991.

<sup>29</sup> Library of Congress. IREX. RC 228, F 43, “about visit of Viacheslav Shestakov (Nov. 1974-April 1975) from the Institute of Cinematic History and Theory of the State Committee for Cinematography.”

<sup>30</sup> Quoted by Yale Richmond, *U.S.-Soviet Cultural Exchanges, 1958-1986*, 64.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. See also in detail about US films in the Soviet Union in Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War*, 128-132, and idem, *Practicing Public Diplomacy: A Cold War Odyssey* (New York: Berhahn Books, 2008), 109-111.

Soviet administration. The normal practice for the Soviet officials was to invite these American producers to participate at Moscow International Film Festival and therefore to justify a future purchase of US film. In the 1970s an additional recommendations by the Soviet Americanists served as an additional proof for an acquisition of such films. Unfortunately, this led to a situation when not recent, but very old (and cheap) American film productions flooded the Soviet film “market.” In 1966 among one hundred foreign films, which were released in the USSR, four movies were produced in the United States – *The Defiant Ones* (1958), *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962), *Some Like It Hot* (1959), *It’s Mad, Mad, Mad World* (1963) – all of them were old enough and directed by people like Stanley Kramer with the obvious pro-communist sympathies. According to the recommendations of Nikolai Sivachev, one American film *The Comedians* was bought by *Sovetskportfilm* immediately after its release in the United States in 1967. This movie directed and produced by Peter Glenville and based on the novel of the same name by Graham Greene, starring Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor, was considered as “anti-imperialist critique” by the Soviet experts. It was officially released in the Soviet Union as early as 1969.<sup>32</sup>

During 1971 three films directed by the leftist American film-makers and recommended by the Soviet Americanists were awarded by Moscow International Festival - *Little Big Man*, *The Sandpit Generals*, *They Shoot Horses Don’t They* – and in a few years they were released for the ordinary Soviet viewers.<sup>33</sup> Since this time *Sovetskportfilm* had released on average four US films annually. Special film exchanges were organized with professional support of the Soviet

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<sup>32</sup> R. Orlova, “Chiornoe i beloe,” *Sovetskii ekran*, 1966, No. 24, 14-15, and p. 19. See in *ibid.*, 1966, No. 24, 19; A. Anikst, “V tiskakh terror,” *ibid.*, 1970, No. 5, p. 16-17; and my interviews with Sergei Burin, Vadim Koleneko, and Marina Vlasova, April 18, 1992, Moscow, Institute of World History.

<sup>33</sup> *Sovetskii ekran*, 1971, No. 17, 1-2.

film critics, some of them, like Shestakov, became regular visitors in US.<sup>34</sup> In 1974 *Sovetskportfilm* released six US films, and American and Soviet film makers began a collaborative project over a new film production *Blue Bird* starring Elizabeth Taylor. In 1977 *Sovetskportfilm* released 63 films from socialist countries and 67 movies from capitalist countries, including 12 American films, and since 1979 it kept releasing till 1982 on average eight US movies annually. Even in 1984, during anti-American ideological campaign in the Soviet Union the most popular foreign films among the Soviet public were still the American movies such as *The Deep*, *The China Syndrome*, *Kramer vs. Kramer*, *3 Days of Condor*, and *Tutsi*.<sup>35</sup> All these films were recommended to the Soviet administration by the Soviet academic visitors to the United States.

According to contemporaries, the most important advisers in the process of buying US films and commenting them for the Soviet audiences were those Soviet experts who worked in ISKAN. They not only published highly-acclaimed books about US cinema during the 1970s, but also submitted their recommendations about the most popular and “progressive” American films to Soviet leadership.<sup>36</sup> In 1976, Soviet ideologists sponsored the special conference with a participation of ISKAN’s experts to discuss not only the problems of American cinema and US feature films, appropriate for the Soviet audiences, but also “what kind of US films should be

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<sup>34</sup> A. Borodin, “My mozhem dat’ drug drugu mnogo tsennogo...,” *Sovetskii ekran*, 1971, No. 16, 16-17.

<sup>35</sup> *Sovetskii ekran*, 1984, No. 24, 17-18.

<sup>36</sup> Unfortunately, the recent scholarship about Soviet film consumption ignores the role of the détente and of the Soviet experts in the foreign films’ acquisition in the USSR. See, e.g., Kristin Roth-Ey, *Moscow Prime Time: How the Soviet Union Built the Media Empire That Lost the Cultural Cold War* (Ithaca, New York, and London: Cornell University Press, 2011), pp. 115-120 about coverage of foreign films and western movie stars in *Sovetskii ekran* from 1960 to 1965, on pp. 116-119, about US stars, Bett Davis, Marilyn Monroe, etc. materials presented from the point of view of “class struggle” and progressive anti-capitalist trends. See the most popular books about US cinema, prepared by the Soviet Americanists: Viacheslav P. Shestakov, *Amerika v zerkale ekrana: Amerikanskoe kino 70-kh godov* (Moscow: Soiuz kinematografistov SSSR, 1977); *Na ekrane Amerika* Collection edited by I.E. Kokarev (Moscow: Progress, 1978); *Amerikanskaia khudozhestvennaia kul’tura v sotsial’no-politicheskom kontekste 70-kh godov 20 veka*, Edited by A. S. Muliarchik and V. P. Shestakov (Moscow: Nauka, 1982).

recommended for the program of Moscow International Film Festivals.”<sup>37</sup> Some participants of this conference recalled how a chair of the Goskino F. Ermash and other representatives of Soviet administration discussed a possibility of Soviet release of US movies *The Godfather* and *Apocalypse Now*, which were shown for the “selected audiences” in Moscow during the end of the 1970s. After 1979 with an access to the new American video tape recording techniques, the experts in US cinema, such as A. Muliarchik and Shestakov, organized the special shows of the new US movies at ISKAN on regular basis. These Americanists played an instrumental role in the mass release of the majority US movies in the Soviet Union during the Brezhnev era.<sup>38</sup>

After visiting the United States, Soviet Americanists raised questions about the dangers and unpredictability of usage of nuclear power in US during the 1970s. Moreover, Soviet experts paid a special attention to the American movie *The China Syndrome*, by a director James Bridges and starring Jane Fonda, Jack Lemmon and Michael Douglas. This film portrayed a real danger of the nuclear plant and attempts of this plant administration to cover up the serious problems with nuclear reactor. Paradoxically, this film was released around the USA on March 16, 1979. In an almost unbelievable coincidence, just twelve days later, on March 28th, the worst nuclear accident in United States history occurred at Three Mile Island near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The real-life incident at Three Mile Island was, in many ways, identical to the plot of the movie. An incorrect reading of equipment at Three Mile Island made the plant's operators think, in error, that there was more water covering the core of the power plant than there actually was -- just exactly what we see unfold on the screen in *The China Syndrome*.

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<sup>37</sup> See about this conference in Valery Golovskoy, “Amerikanskoe kino – “za” i “protiv” (konferentsia 1976 goda),” idem, *Eto bylo nedavno... Izbarannye publikatsii za 30 let* (Baltimore, MD: Seagull Press, 2010), 156-163. See also his essay, “Amerikanskie fil'my na sovetskikh ekranakh (1957-1980),” Golovskoy, *Eto bylo nedavno*, 169-177.

<sup>38</sup> See my e-mail correspondence with Vladislav Zubok, May 28, 2013. Golovskoy recalled how a chair of the Goskino F. Ermash and other representatives of Soviet administration discussed a possibility of Soviet release of US movies *The Godfather* and *Apocalypse Now*, which were shown for the “selected audiences” in Moscow during the end of the 1970s. See in Valery Golovskoy, “Amerikanskoe kino,” p. 158-159.



Soviet Americanists recommended the Soviet government to buy this film immediately (for ideological reasons, of course). It is noteworthy that simultaneously such different scholars like Aleksandr Fursenko from Leningrad, Viacheslav Shestakov and Nikolai Bolkhovitinov from Moscow, and Arnold Shlepakov from Kyiv included a suggestion about buying this movie in their “academic reports” during the late spring of 1979.<sup>39</sup> As early as summer of 1979, the organizers of the Moscow International Film Festival asked the director of *The China Syndrome* to show it as a “non-official invited” (*vne-konkursnyi*) film for this event.<sup>40</sup> After its release in the USSR in 1981, this American movie became a sensation and was used not only for a traditional criticism of American imperialism but also for serious discussions about problems of energy, ecology and conservation.<sup>41</sup>

During the 1970s, Soviet Americanists, especially the researchers from the KGB-controlled centers like ISKAN, together with Soviet journalists who worked in the United States, provided the Soviet administration with recommendations about the improvement and “modernization” of Soviet radio and television. Soviet scholars together with the young Soviet journalists-*mezhdunarodniki*, such as Ekaterina Tarkhanova, Vladimir Pozner and Igor Fesunenکو, contributed to slow westernization of Soviet radio and television.<sup>42</sup> “As far as I remember,” Nikolai Bolkhovitinov explained, “my colleagues-Americanists recommended their supervisors to include the talk shows, live TV, variety shows with elements of American jazz and beat music in Soviet television programs as early as the 1970s. And some of these

<sup>39</sup> Interviews with Aleksandr Fursenko, Moscow, March 19, 1991, Nikolai N. Bolkhovitinov, Moscow, May 21, 2001, and Arnold M. Shlepakov, Kyiv, April 4, 1991.

<sup>40</sup> V. Shitova, “Sil’nee sily,” *Sovetskii ekran*, 1979, No. 20, 16-17.

<sup>41</sup> About an official release of this movie see in *Sovetskii ekran*, 1981, No. 17, 19; No. 24, 15 (this movie was among eight US films released in 1981). Compare with a special essay about Jane Fonda and her role in this film: Gennadii Frolov, “Dzhein Fonda,” *ibid.*, 1980, No. 2, 16-17.

<sup>42</sup> See Fedor I. Razzakov, *Gibel' sovetskogo TV: Tainy televideniia ot Stalina do Gorbacheva. 1930-1991* (Moscow: EKSMO, 2009), 7-260, 461ff; and my material in Sergei I. Zhuk, “Richard Stites, the Soviet West, Media, and the Soviet Americanists,” *Cultural Cabaret: Russian and American Essays for Richard Stites*, Edited by David Goldfrank and Pavel Lyssakov (Washington, D.C.: New Academia Publishing, 2012), 159-177.

recommendations were implemented in various TV shows.”<sup>43</sup> This collaboration of Americanists and journalists produced also, as Aleksandr Fursenko added, “the official invitations to American musicians like BB King, and various American theatrical groups to tour in the USSR.”<sup>44</sup> The American TV miniseries such as *Daktari*, broadcast in the USSR in June 1973, *Lassie* (January 1974), *Adventures in Africa* (August 1976), which were recommended by both Soviet scholars and journalists, became the most popular television shows among the Soviet children.<sup>45</sup> As we see “academic détente” led also to cultural détente in Soviet society, contributing to the new cultural forms and cultural practices from “capitalist West” to everyday cultural consumption of not only Soviet academic elite, but also ordinary Soviet people.

As a result of the Soviet experts’ recommendations, the rare TV films based on the classical foreign literature from capitalist countries appeared on the Soviet TV during the Brezhnev era. Since the middle of the 1970s, the cultural situation of détente resulted in showing more television films, shows and information directly from the capitalist West.<sup>46</sup> According to the most complete recordings of everyday life from five summer school diaries during the period of the 1970s, the Soviet children watched on Soviet television not only the broadcast from America about the ice hockey matches between the Soviet and Canadian hockey teams, but also the American television series *Lassie* about the adventures of a collie dog, the British mystery film *The Moon Stone* based on Wilkie Collins’ detective novel and various BBC television miniseries like *David Copperfield* based on Charles Dickens’ novel. As one sixteen-year rock music fan reacted to the cultural détente on television in late 1977, “it’s amazing to see what is going

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<sup>43</sup> Interview with Nikolai N. Bolkhovitinov, May 12, 1996, Moscow.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Aleksandr Fursenko, Moscow, March 19, 1991.

<sup>45</sup> Fedor I. Razzakov, Op. cit, 71ff. Compare with my interview with Robert F. Ivanov, Moscow, June 25, 1991.

<sup>46</sup> Fursenko mentioned a discussion about the “ideologically reliable” TV mini-series from the USA he recommended in his academic reports. Eventually, after this discussion, the representatives of the USSR Ministry of Culture agreed about the purchase of the television films based on the classical literature, like Charles Dickens or Jack London. See in Interview with Aleksandr Fursenko, Moscow, March 19, 1991, and Aleksandr Anikst, “Bez vdokhnovenia,” *Sovetskii ekran*, 1975, No. 24, p. 4.

on our television: since 1975 we have watched an American movie about Lassie, various broadcasts about Soviet-American space flights of *Soyuz-Apollon* and scientific exchanges between us and Americans, then we have seen an English detective movie *The Moon Stone*, and finally, on Soviet television the official political show *Mezhdunarodnaia panorama* is introduced by the [unannounced] melody of *One of These Days* from Pink Floyd's album *Meddle*.<sup>47</sup> Meanwhile, the adult Soviet audiences fell in love with the BBC television series *The Forsyte Saga* based on John Galsworthy's novel and other Western television movies, like an Italian film *The Life of Leonardo da Vinci* by Renato Castellani. According to the Soviet film critics, these movies were the most popular Western feature films, shown on the Soviet TV during the 1970s.<sup>48</sup> As one contemporary summarized the situation in the Soviet media during the détente, "It was a real **Western cultural invasion** in the Soviet Union. Since 1975 the Soviet audiences had been exposed to the massive attacks of images and sounds from the capitalist West on television, in the movies, on a radio, on the music records, and of course on a dance floor."<sup>49</sup>

This cultural détente on Soviet television created an obvious ideological confusion, especially in Soviet provinces. On March 4, 1972, a communist leader from one industrial region of Soviet Ukraine complained to local Komsomol ideologists, "It is too much capitalist West on our Soviet television screens today... Television shows about American music and films, about western fashions prevail on our central channel from Moscow. It looks like a kind of Americanization! It confuses our Soviet youth who try to imitate these foreign images in their

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<sup>47</sup> School Summer Diary of Aleksandr Gusar, Pavlograd, Dnipropetrovsk Region, 1970-1977: November 8, 1977.

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Askold B., a son of a head of tourist department in Dnipropetrovsk Trade Unions branch, Dnipropetrovsk University, April 15, 1993, *Novyny kinoekranu*, 1970, No. 2, p. 14. See an article about the BBC adaptation of *David Copperfield* which was shown on the Soviet TV in Aleksandr Anikst, "Bez vdokhnovenia," *Sovetskii ekran*, 1975, No. 24, p. 4. See also a negative review of the British TV film *The Moon Stone* based on Wilkie Collins' detective novel which was shown on the Soviet TV as well in Aleksandr Anikst, "Kamen' okazalsia ne dragotsennym," *Sovetskii ekran*, 1975, No. 20, p. 4. See also Leonid Parfionov, *Namedni*, 232, 286.

<sup>49</sup> See interview with Suvorov.

behavior... We need to stop it!”<sup>50</sup> Ten years later, in 1982, a local newspaper still complained about “Americanization on Soviet screens.”<sup>51</sup> According to my analysis of the section in local newspapers with “television programs” from Kyiv, Cherkasy, Zaporizhie, Donetsk and Dnipropetrovsk Regions in Ukraine, a number of television shows, containing “material from capitalist West,” increased from 7-10 shows per week in 1968, to 14-18 per week in 1972 and reaching a peak in 1978 with 24-27 shows per week.<sup>52</sup>

Local party leaders in the provincial Ukrainian cities tried to stop this “Americanization” in TV broadcasting, complaining to the central administration about this “westernization of TV images” and trying to produce local “counter-propagandist anti-capitalist” TV shows, containing sometime criticism of the material shown on “a central Moscow channel.”<sup>53</sup> Paradoxically, because of the centralization of Soviet television during the Brezhnev era, local administration in the “Soviet provinces” failed to stop to prevent “westernization of TV images” on local TV screens. The central channel of Soviet television, a crucial creative mechanism for a formation of All-Union identity in Soviet provinces, became instrumental in adding the new elements of western popular culture (even in the Soviet “covers”) to a construction (and simultaneous confusion) of “visual matrix” of this Soviet identity.<sup>54</sup>

Even local TV viewers were amazed and confused with the changes on Soviet television during the 1970s. As one high-school student from a small provincial Soviet town wrote in his

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<sup>50</sup> Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Dnipropetrovskoi Oblasti, (hereafter - DADO) f. 22, op. 19, d. 2, ll. 135-145, especially 142-143. Compare with my interview with Igor T., KGB officer, Dnipropetrovsk, May 15, 1991, and Tsentral’nyi Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Vyshchykh Organiv Vlady ta Upravlinnia Ukrainy (hereafter – TsDAVOVUU), f. 4915, op. 1, d. 3438, ll. 4-9.

<sup>51</sup> E. Iakovlev, “Navazhdenie (kinoobozrenie),” *Dneprovskaiia Pravda*, 1982, February 4, p. 3.

<sup>52</sup> I used such local periodicals as *Ukrains’ka Pravda*, *Shevchenkiv krai*, *Vechernii Donetsk*, *Dnepr vechernii* etc.

<sup>53</sup> DADO, f. 22, op. 19, d. 2, ll. 135-145, d. 156 (for 1973), l. 10, ll. 10ob-11, and TsDAVOVUU, f. 4915, op. 1, d. 3438, ll. 4-9.

<sup>54</sup> Ellen Propper Mickiewicz, *Media and the Russian Public* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1981), 73-8; Kristin Roth-Ey, *Moscow Prime Time: How the Soviet Union Built the Media Empire That Lost the Cultural Cold War*. (Ithaca, New York, and London: Cornell University Press, 2011), 281.

diary in 1976, “What is going on our television? A few years ago a Moscow TV channel presented rock music as ‘sound of capitalist degeneration and of cultural crisis.’ Now they included western rock [music] in every show. It is like our own Soviet Westernization!!! A year ago (1975), in *Benefis* of Larisa Golubkina they permitted Soviet musicians to cover ‘Ms Vanderbilt’ by McCartney and the Wings. This year in one show *Volshebnyi fonar*’ I noticed at least four Russian covers of arias from rock opera *Jesus Christ Superstar*, including my favorite ‘King Herod’s Song’, two covers of the Beatles songs like ‘Octopus’s Garden’ and ‘Let It Be’ one with Sweet’s ‘Funny, Funny’ and Russian covers of music from American films *Godfather*, *Love Story* and *My Fairy Lady*.”<sup>55</sup> Next year another student from another small Soviet town noted, “It is amazing how this international détente has changed our television... On a channel of the Central television, our family watched recently the concerts of western music featuring ABBA and Smokey... My mom watched tonight the television shows and films only from the capitalist West. She was so frustrated by this ‘**capitalist invasion**’ in our culture that she called this situation ‘**the détente’s new cultural revolution**’.”<sup>56</sup>

### Conclusion

Yet, both academic and cultural détente had an explicit anti-capitalist, and overall, anti-American bias. Both “academic” publications and “popular” recommendations by Soviet Americanists had the Marxist, anti-imperialist limitations for “appropriating” American ideas and cultural practices in everyday cultural consumption. Thus, all American films, recommended by Soviet Americanists, played a very important role in anti-capitalist and anti-American propaganda. During the 1970s and early 1980s Soviet college student watched the new American films like *The Comedians*, *The Sandpit Generals*, *They Shoot Horses Don’t They*, *The New*

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<sup>55</sup> School diary of Vladimir Solodovnik, Sinel’nikovo, Dnipropetrovsk Region, December 7, 1976.

<sup>56</sup> School diary of Oleg Grin, Vatutino, Cherkasy Region, January 16, 1977.

*Centurions*, *Bless the Beasts and Children*, *The Domino Principle*, *Oklahoma Crude*, *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* and *3 Days of Condor* which presented mainly the leftist criticism of the American realities, contributing to the mental construction of positive identity of Soviet self. One college student, who loved American rock and roll and western movies, noted, after watching in one week of August of 1982 such different American movies as *The Domino Principle*, *Oklahoma Crude*, *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* and *3 Days of Condor*, “we perhaps have not enough products in our food stores and fewer cars on our roads, but our youth has much brighter future than those Americans.”<sup>57</sup> As another student commented in his diary after watching the American film, a police drama *New Centurions*, “it is good to live in the West when you have money and power, but it is very dangerous to live there if you are just an ordinary poor man. I would rather stay in my own country.”<sup>58</sup> Two anti-CIA thrillers – *3 Days of Condor* by Sydney Pollack (1975) and *The Domino Principle* by Stanley Kramer (1977) - especially influenced the negative perception of America and of “Western imperialism” among Soviet college students. As some college students explained in their writing, “The military industrial complex and the intelligence agencies rule the West. After watching Pollack’s and Kramer’s films, we understand that the capitalist America has no future.”<sup>59</sup>

This was the very conclusion which Soviet ideologists and the KGB expected from the Soviet audience’s reaction to the “cultural détente” with “capitalist America.” “Academic détente” had to justify in scholarly way such a perception of the cultural politics of relaxation of

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<sup>57</sup> School summer diary of Oleg Grin, Kyiv, August 29, 1982.

<sup>58</sup> See a school diary of Aleksandr Gusar, July 5, 1975. *New Centurions* originally released in US in 1972 became very popular film in 1974-75 in the Soviet Union. See *Sovetskii ekran*, 1975, No. 10, p. 6. See how local periodicals described the American films, especially in E. Iakovlev, “Navazhdenie (kinoobozrenie),” *Dneprovskaiia Pravda*, 1982, February 4, p. 3.

<sup>59</sup> School diary of Andrei Vadimov, Dnipropetrovsk, December 5, 1978. *3 Days of Condor* was a 1975 US political thriller movie directed by Sydney Pollack and starring Robert Redford, Faye Dunaway and Max von Sydow. Another film, *The Domino Principle* was a 1977 US thriller film starring Gene Hackman, Candice Bergen, Mickey Rooney and Richard Widmark directed by Stanley Kramer.

international tensions between the USSR and the United States.<sup>60</sup> At the same time the influx of cultural products from the capitalist West, stimulated by détente, intensified an ideological confusion in Soviet society during the 1970s.<sup>61</sup> Indirectly, Soviet Americanists as mediators between American and Soviet cultures played very important role in this process of cultural confusion.

Academic détente as the entire relaxation of the international relations during the Brezhnev era had a very limited and elitist character, especially for American studies in the USSR. According to the available documents, no more than 600 Soviet Americanists visited the United States during this time, and almost 80 percent of these Soviet academic visitors were representatives of academic and state officials, with only 4 female scholars (less than 1 percent). So it was predominantly male community of Soviet visitors. Sometimes, the talented and young Soviet scholars could manage to get to America as “supporting assistants” [*soprovozhdaishchie*] of Soviet state apparatchiks. The most typical cases were the “American” visits of young Sivachev in 1967 as “an assistant” of the official from the USSR Ministry of Education, and of Shestakov, “assisting” V. Baskakov, a director of the USSR Institute of

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<sup>60</sup> During détente, as Bolkhovitinov and Fursenko noted, and Ivanov and Leshchenko agreed, the KGB tried to develop a very important idea about Soviet partners in negotiations from the West and impose this idea in the consciousness of the Soviet audience. This idea was about unreliability of the Western politicians in the long run. In such an interpretation the Western powers, especially the United States, were presented not just as the class enemies of the Soviet Union, but also as very unreliable political and economic partners. To some extent academic studies, including American studies, had to promote the major ideas of détente, but at the same time to remind this notion to Soviet audience all the time. Even the most popular Soviet television shows, like the television miniseries of 1973 *Seventeen Moments of Spring* emphasized this “unreliable” position of the Soviet Western Allies during the WWII.

<sup>61</sup> A crucial moment in this confusion of westernization was the détente of the 1970s, especially the period from 1972 to 1979. During this period Soviet administration bought the official licenses for manufacturing popular music records from the West, and officially licensed western movies were shown (more than 150 feature films from 70 countries in 1973 alone), Soviet TV broadcast the concerts of western popular musicians (since January 11, 1977, a special Soviet TV show “Melodies and Rhythms of Foreign Estrada” had been shown on the regular basis); Western rock music was incorporated into official Soviet television shows, such as *International Panorama*, *Ogoniok*, *Benefis*, *Volshebnyi fonar’* and *Vesolye rebiata* [with a range of music - from the light dancing tunes of ABBA, the Beatles, Boney M, Paul McCartney and Smokey, arias from *Jesus Christ Superstar* to a more heavier beat of Sweet, Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple, Nazareth, Queen and UFO], western pop stars such as Cliff Richard, BB King, Boney M, Elton John and others performed live for the Soviet public in the USSR and fragments of these concerts were shown on Soviet television. See in Leonid Parfenov, *Namedni. Nasha era. 1971-1980* (Moscow: KoLibri, 2009), 215 (1978).

Cinematic History and Theory of the State Committee for Cinematography during their official visit in 1974. The social background of Soviet visitors also reflected the elitist character of Soviet academic détente: – more than 70 percent of Soviet researchers in America came from the families of Soviet intellectual and party elite, and almost 80 percent of them represented the research centers (such as ISKAN and IMEMO) from only one city – Moscow.

Overall, the discursive practices of Soviet Americanists fit the Soviet authoritative discourse. But after their American visits, many, especially young Soviet researchers, added to the prevailing “factological” discursive strategies their new scenario of “critical recommendations and advising.” They criticized their American counterparts, but at the same time, they not only advised Soviet leadership about American politics, economy and culture, but also popularized American realities, cultural products, theories and approaches among ordinary Soviet audiences. Unfortunately, Soviet Americanists’ “advising practices” also had limited and uneven character during the Brezhnev era. Soviet leaders used the ISKAN and IMEMO policy analysts’ advices and recommendations about US policy and diplomacy up to 1979. Not until perestroika did Americanists resume their active “advising” functions for Soviet politicians. Soviet leaders also ignored major recommendations of Americanists about dissemination of US cultural products in the USSR. Only limited number of US movies from the lists recommended by ISKAN experts was selected by Goskino for showing in Soviet movie theaters. The most recommended (by Americanists) films, like *The Godfather* and *Apocalypse Now*, were never released in the Soviet Union. Soviet historians also had limited success in promoting the new theoretical approaches from America. Their publications were censored, and they were punished by bans for their travel to America for the slightest “ideological deviation.”



But in a longer historical perspective, Soviet participation in academic détente was successful. Soviet Americanists began their own participation in creation of international community of scholars, becoming the partners in academic exchange with their American colleagues. They established good relations not only with American experts in US history, politics and culture, but also with American specialists in Russian/Soviet studies. To some extent, participation of Soviet Americanists in this international community would not only shape the development of American studies in the USSR, but also influence Russian studies in America. After visiting America, Soviet Americanists became hosts for American guests, experts in Russian studies, building the strong personal connections with them - Bolkhovitinov with Norman Saul, Sivachev with Donald Raleigh, Vladimir Sogrin with Saul and Alfred Rieber, etc. Eventually, through these personal connections Soviet Americanists and their American colleagues created the important academic international network, which involved their students as well, and which survived the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Visits to America and contacts with American people became the most important element of emphasizing this feeling of being the mediators between American and Soviet cultures, serving as special agents of modernity in the “closed” Soviet society.<sup>62</sup> Eventually, all these participants in academic exchange, including the KGB-connected scholars, and those who, like Bolkhovitinov, distanced themselves from the KGB, brought various elements of American modernity to Soviet society and contributed to its further “opening” to “the capitalist West.”

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<sup>62</sup> See also Sergei I. Zhuk, “Closing and Opening Soviet Society...,” 123-158.